

<b>10 January 2023</b>		<b>ITEM: 8</b>
<b>Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Homelessness Update – 2022</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> None	
<b>Report of:</b> Ben Tovey – Strategic Lead – Housing Solutions		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> N/A		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Ewelina Sorbjan – Interim Director of Housing		
<b>This report is</b> Public		

## **Executive Summary**

This report provides an update on the Homelessness picture for 2022 with regards to the Housing Solutions service. Huge pressures on the service have been mitigated by the expansion of the Temporary Accommodation portfolio. Recognising Housing as one of the key elements of the Councils 'Human Learning Systems' approach to residents has and will continue to require funding.

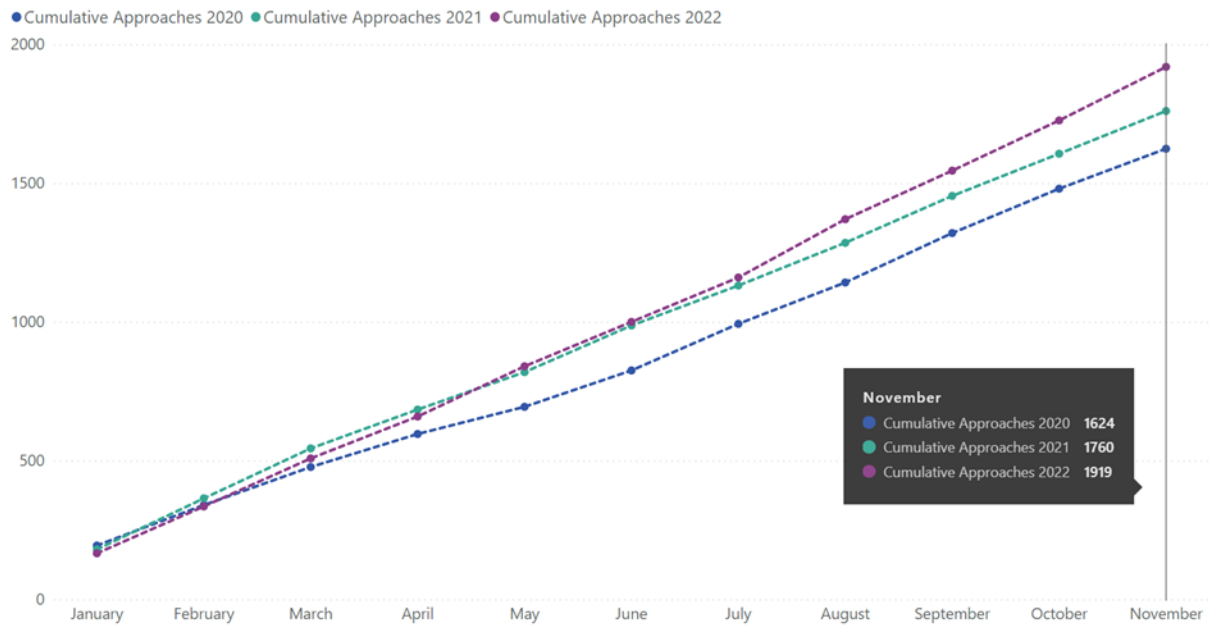
### **1. Recommendation(s)**

**1.1 Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the contents of this update report.**

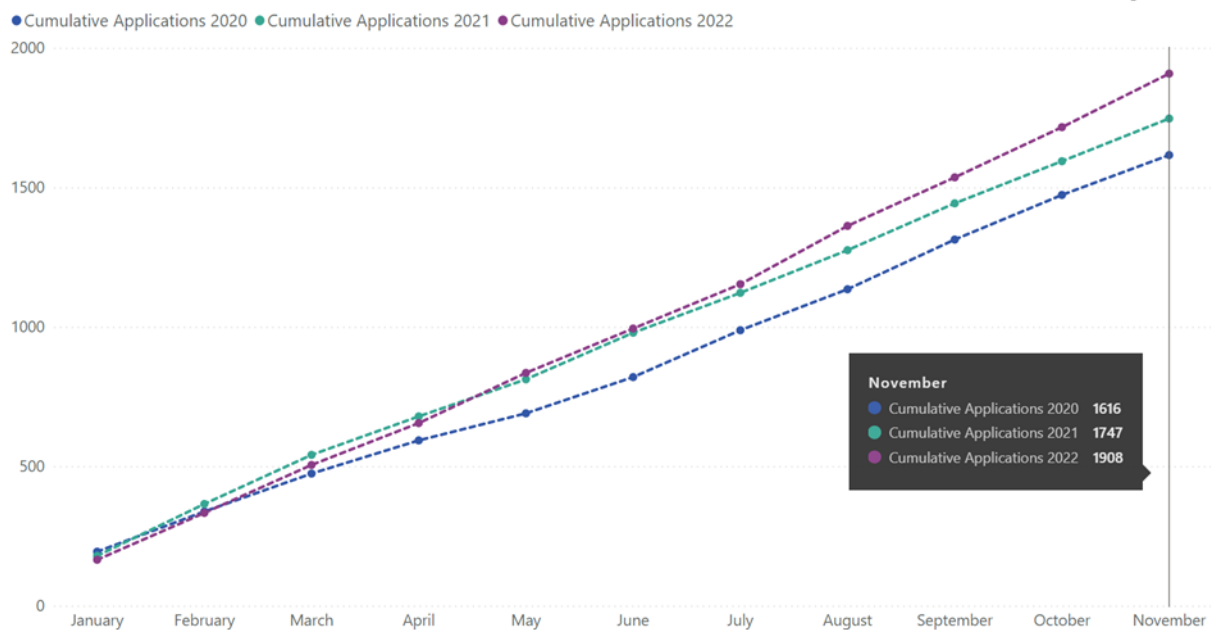
### **2. Housing Solutions – Homelessness Presentations**

2.1. We have had a busy year in homelessness. Covid-19 measures relating to the prevention from eviction ended in 2021 but the courts dealing with backlogs processed the cases at different paces with peaks at the beginning of the year and late summer 2022. We're ending the year with cost of living pressures driving up approaches to the service and will end the year with over 2000 approaches in 2022 and a similar number of applications taken.

Cumulative Approaches by Year



Cumulative Applications Taken by Year



### 3. Impact on Temporary Accommodation

3.1 We began the year in a good place having moved many of the 'Everyone In' cohort of clients residing in our temporary accommodation (TA) into longer term more secure forms of tenure.

Active Placements by Date and Placement Type

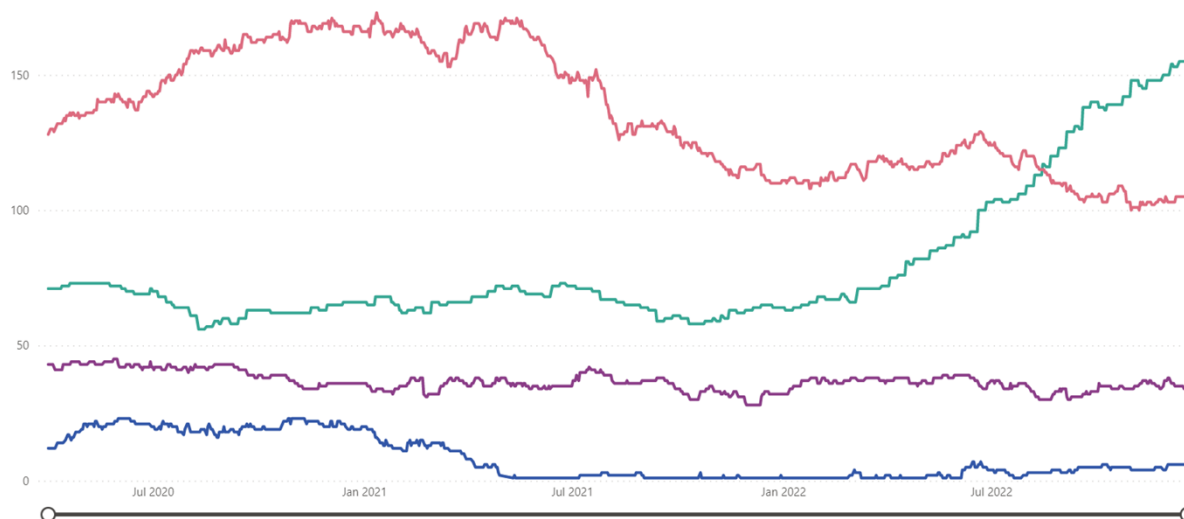


This process was supported by the purchase of new homes utilising 'Right to Buy' receipts, combined with HRA prudential borrowing, to purchase properties on the open market. In 2021 these properties were retained in general needs stock with 'Direct Offers' made to those in TA. In 2022 we utilised purchased properties to increase our Temporary Accommodation portfolio. This decision was taken to reduce cost and increase control over the quality and location of the TA placements.

3.2 The visualisations below demonstrates the impact of this exercise with the numbers in TA increasing by 50% during the year while the numbers in private TA have halved over the same period. It also shows a massive reduction in the numbers being placed outside Thurrock when requiring emergency accommodation. Of the 16 external placements 6 were for safety reasons or at the residents behest.

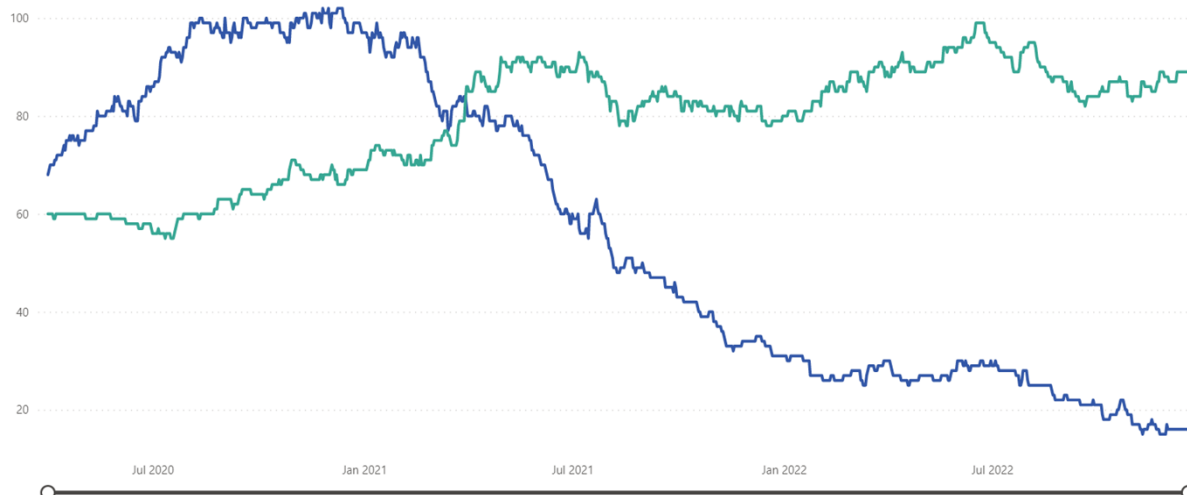
Active Placements by Date and Placement Type

Placement Type ● B&B ● Furnished Let ● Hostel ● Nightly Let



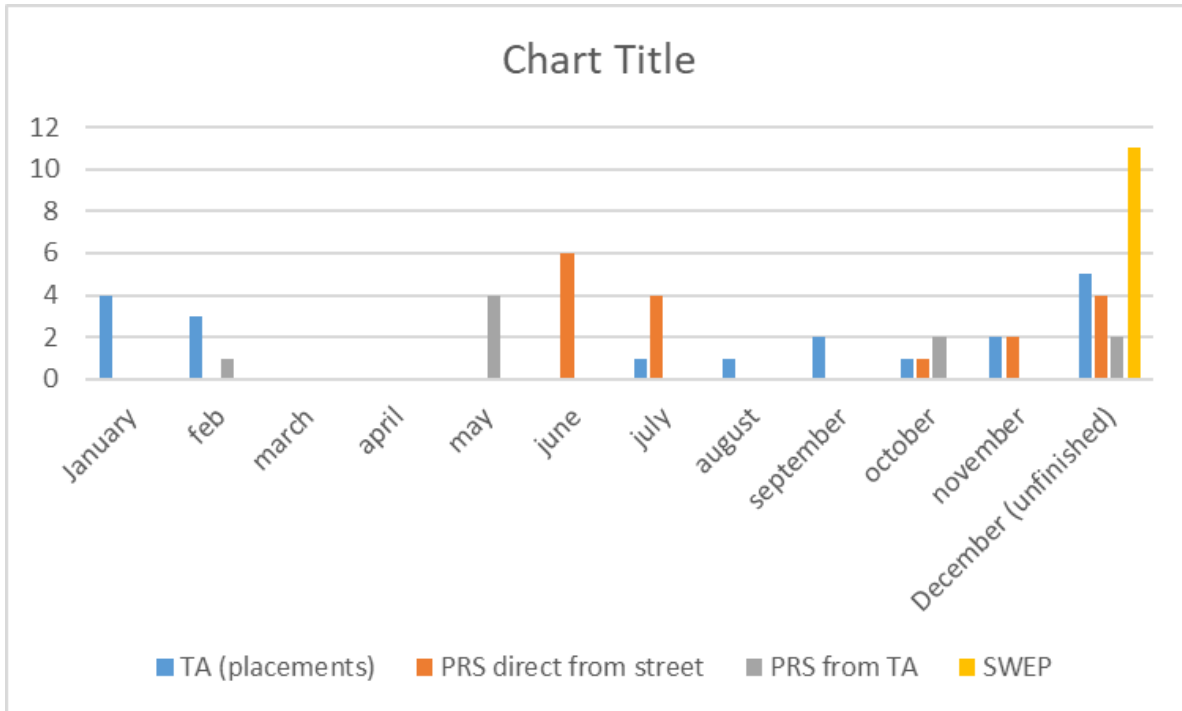
Active Nightly Let Placements by Date and In/Out of Borough

In Thurrock? ● No ● Yes



#### 4. Rough Sleeping

4.1 Last year I spoke to members about the success of 'Everyone In' and we have attempted to apply the same principles to our Rough Sleepers beyond the end of that scheme. We aim to make a suitable offer of accommodation to anyone who finds themselves roofless regardless of their ability to demonstrate they meet 'Priority Need' status. We've seen what can be achieved with the right amount of support but we've also seen the scale of the challenge and its impact on our resources. We will continue to encourage those with well-established community links to seek assistance within their own areas. At the time of writing we had accommodated 19 Rough Sleepers in to Temporary Accommodation with 6 of these moving on to PRS (with financial assistance provided) and 3 in to Council accommodation, including 1 Housing 1<sup>st</sup> placement. We housed a record 18 Rough Sleepers directly in to PRS accommodation utilising our Rough Sleeper Initiative grant from DLUHC



- 4.2 We've utilised the Councils comms channels including Social media and continue to use the 'outreach' video our Rough Sleeper Coordinator, assisted by local faith groups, made last year and have seen real engagement from the community in Thurrock in getting support where it is needed.

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/homelessness/if-youre-homeless-or-likely-to-become-homeless> or watch this video about StreetLink and our outreach team: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3MV0aBnD4c>

If you're concerned about someone sleeping rough, you can connect them to local services by sending an alert to StreetLink at: <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>, via the StreetLink app or by calling: 0300 500 0914.

## 5. Human Learning Systems

- 5.1 Increased collaboration between council teams in Adult Social Care, Housing & Health, EPUT and Childrens Social Care have seen us applying a more flexible approach to our remits. Vulnerable adults (including care leavers) who may have a history of failed tenancies or who've moved between increasingly expensive care placements, hospital admissions or the criminal justice system have been offered further housing opportunities, with multidisciplinary teams supporting them.

We've seen huge pressure on Hospital beds with Duty to Refer numbers going up exponentially. Hospital teams have commented on just how many of the general admissions needs have substantial mental health challenges.

The work and successful outcomes of our multidisciplinary teams has led to the creation of a 'Complex Care Team' that will sit within the Adults, Housing & Health service and provide a lead on this work. We will also be expanding our Housing 1<sup>st</sup> Service to include a specialist area of provision led by a CPN (Community Psychiatric Nurse) for those with serious and enduring Mental Health challenges.

- 6. Costs** The preventative work detailed above is aimed at providing an improved quality of life for some of our most vulnerable residents, it will undoubtedly lead to cost avoidance in Health, and Criminal Justice settings as well as Adult & Childrens Social Care budgets but it has and will continue to have an impact on our Housing budget. We have seen a huge increase in rental costs, a national trend exacerbated in Thurrock by London Authorities utilising our PRS market to house their residents. With this and the increased demand for housing assistance we have identified growth within the Housing Solutions budget of £750k.

- 7. Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

## **8. Implications**

### **8.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
**Strategic Lead - Corporate Finance –  
Resources and Place Delivery**

The increase in the number of approaches from residents in relation to homelessness represents a significant financial risk to the Council.

After careful assessment, growth has been identified within the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy, and draft budget proposals for the following financial year.

The acquisition of open market properties in order to find permanent accommodation solutions and increase the level of Council owned housing is not available to the Council in the following financial years due to legislative and financial constraints.

Expenditure on temporary housing solutions will continue to be closely monitored, and any realisation of increased expenditure risks reported accordingly.

## 8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Deirdre Collins**  
**Principal Barrister, Prosecutions, Litigation  
and Housing**

All local authorities have a duty under the Housing Act and Homelessness Reduction Act to assist all eligible applicants who present as homeless.

As an update report on action taken, there are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## 8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**  
**Strategic Lead: Community Development and  
Equalities**

As this report is for information there are no direct diversity implications.

## 8.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder and Looked After Children

Not applicable

## 9. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

## 10. Appendices to the report

None

### Report Author:

Ben Tovey

Strategic Lead – Housing Solutions

Housing Solutions